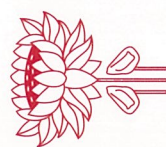
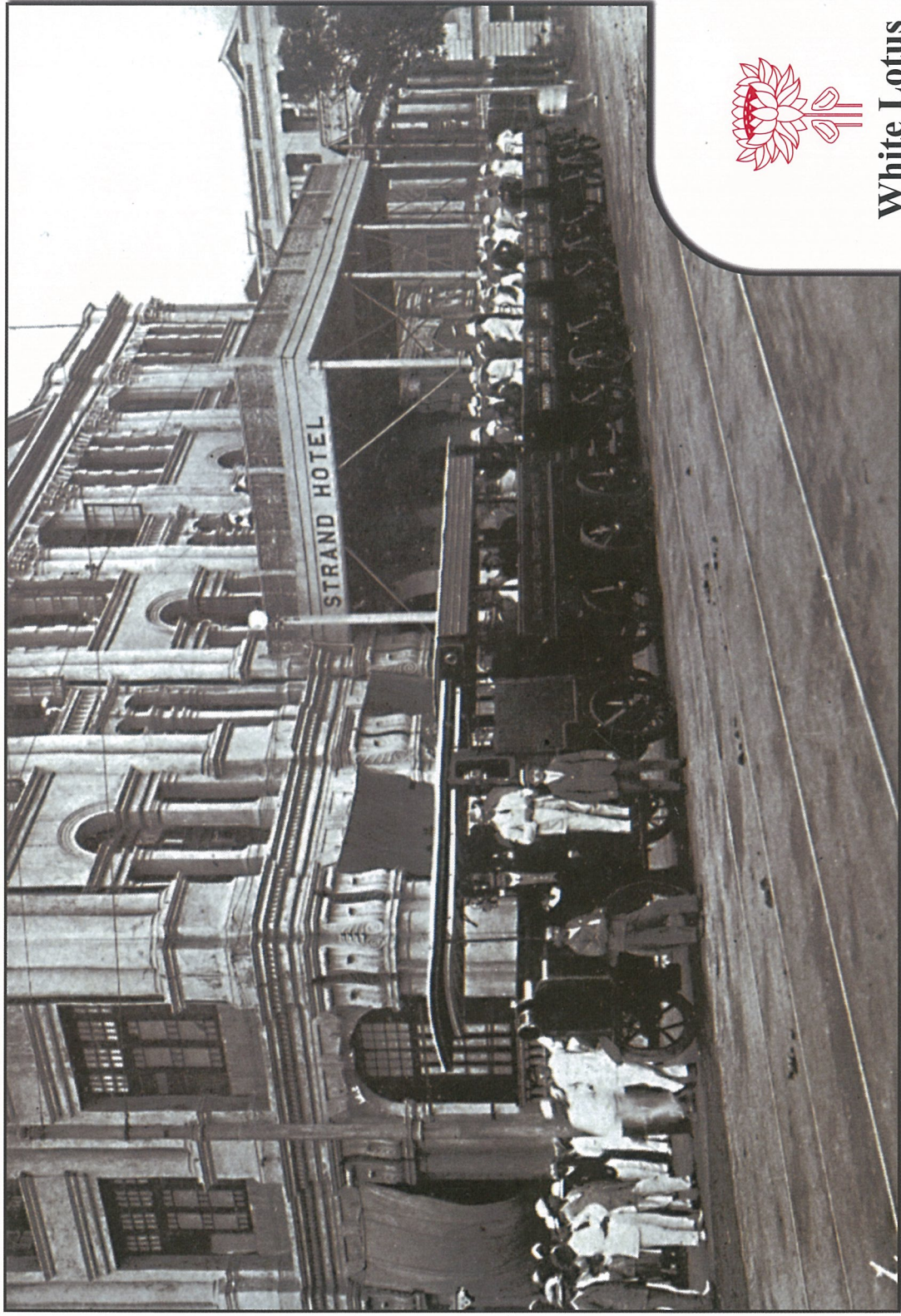


TWENTIETH CENTURY IMPRESSIONS OF BURMA

**Its History, People, Commerce,
Industries, and Resources.**

Arnold Wright,
H.A. Cartwright and O. Breakspear



White Lotus

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OF
BURMA.



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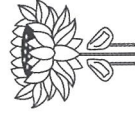


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AND RESOURCES.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: ARNOLD WRIGHT (LONDON).

ASSISTANT EDITORS: H. A. CARTWRIGHT and O. BREAKSPEAR (RANGOON).



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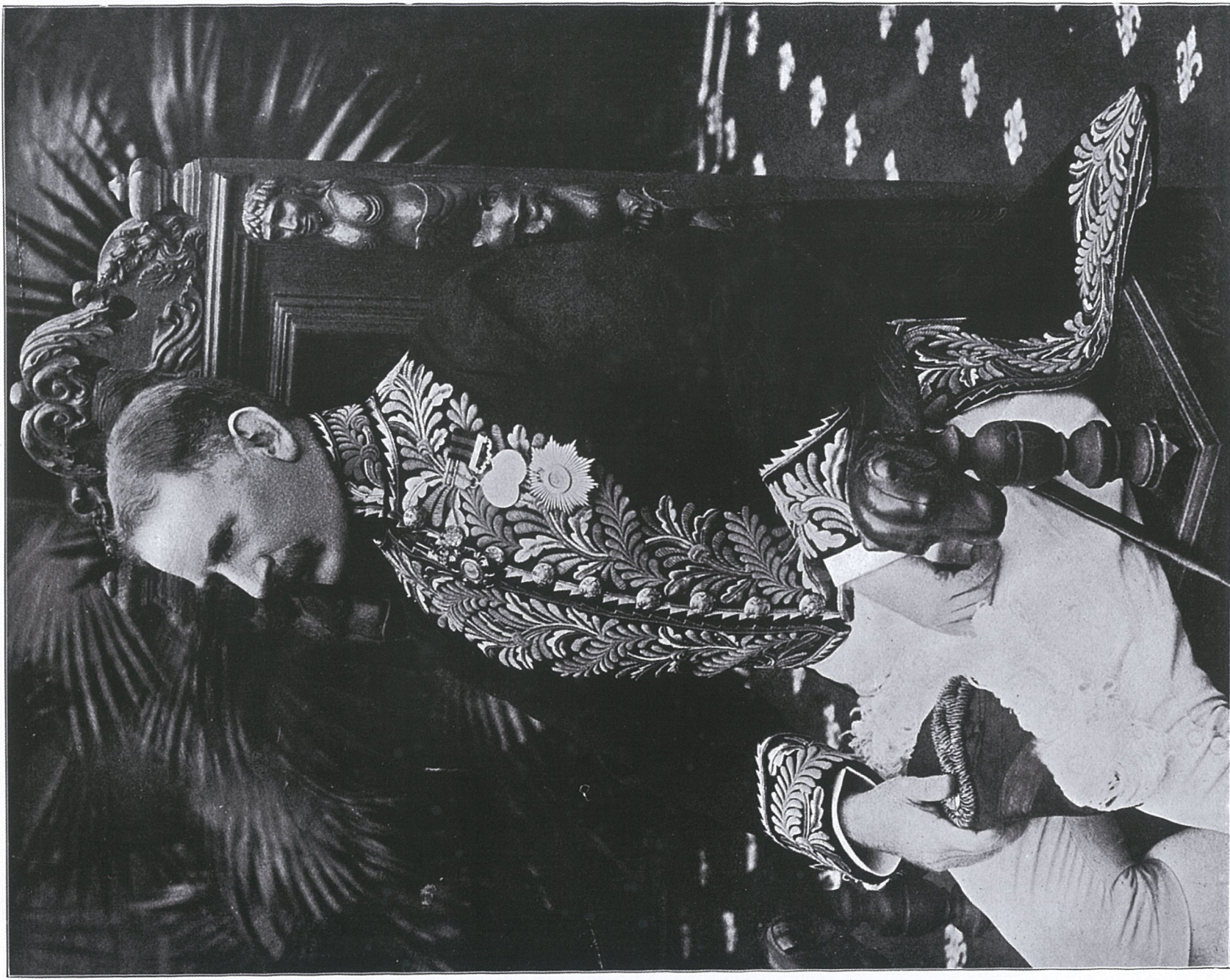
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Lieutenant-Governor of Burma.



LADY WHITE,
Wife of the Lieutenant-Governor of Burma.



PREFACE.

IN issuing this work to the public it seems desirable that the compilers should state briefly the aims which they have had before them in carrying through the undertaking. The publication is one of a now rather lengthy series, designed to give a literary survey of the various component parts of the British Empire and of leading countries in which British capital is extensively invested, or in which British political interests centre. Previous books issued by the firm have dealt with Western Australia, Natal, the Orange River Colony, Ceylon, British Malaya, Hongkong, Shanghai and other Treaty Ports of China, Egypt, and Netherlands India. Siam has also been the subject of exhaustive treatment in this literary form, and the country's interests, its trade, and its history are so intimately bound up with those of Burma that for the sake of completeness the work has been embodied in the present volume.

Burma, at the present time, forms an integral part of Britain's Indian Empire, but it is something more than an Indian province. Its geographical position, with a frontier which marches with the boundaries of the Chinese Empire and of the Indo-Chinese Empire of France, a mighty waterway which gives access to the vast mountain regions of the great Asiatic range, and a coast line which stretches for 1,200 miles along the eastern side of the Bay of Bengal, is one of exceptional importance, and that importance will increase as the inevitable development of the great continental railway system of Asia brings the ports of the Straits of Malacca into direct communication with India, and eventually through India with the countries of Europe. Burma, in fine, is a most important link in the British Imperial chain, and it has so much that places it apart from the rest of British India

PREFACE.

that it not merely deserves but almost commands independent treatment. In this work the attempt has been made to deal exhaustively with every phase of Burmese life. The history of the country is fully treated, and graphic pictures are drawn by competent writers of the religious and social life of this, perhaps, most delightful race in Asia owing allegiance to Britain. The administration, law, and finance of the province are dealt with by experts; a full account is also given of the commerce, industries, and social aspects of life, while clear and interesting descriptions are furnished of the principal populous centres of the country. The illustrations, reproductions of hundreds of photographs chiefly taken by our own artists, will be found to be exceptionally varied and interesting. They supply in the aggregate a complete and most delightful survey of Burma from every conceivable standpoint.

In the work of compilation the publisher's staff have been greatly assisted by the ready aid and co-operation afforded them in official quarters. As will be seen by a glance at the list of contents, several of the principal officials contributed articles on the special subjects with which their duties are concerned. Generally the greatest willingness was shown by those in authority to forward the enterprise, and for these services the publishers desire to tender their heartiest thanks.

DECEMBER, 1909.

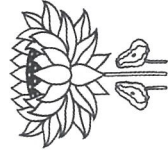




Twentieth Century Impressions of Siam:

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Oliver T. Breakspear



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Twentieth Century Impressions of Burma:

ITS HISTORY, PEOPLE, COMMERCE, INDUSTRIES, AND RESOURCES.

HISTORY.

BY ARNOLD WRIGHT.

CHAPTER I.

Ancient Burma and its Kings—Invasion of Arakan in the Eleventh Century—Chinese Invasion of Burma in the Twelfth Century—Disruption of the Pagan Kingdom and Establishment of Shan Influence in Burma—European Influence—The Portuguese in Pegu—King Branginoco's Rise to Power in Ava—He conquers Pegu—Occupies Martaban and Promes—Attacks Siam—Diego Suarez, a Portuguese Adventurer, in power—His Terrible Death—Wars between Ava and Pegu—Portuguese Adventurers in Arakan—Nicote, a Portuguese, becomes Ruler of Pegu and Toungoo—His Death—Gonzales, a Spaniard, usurps Authority—His Defeat by the King of Arakan.



THE history of Burma, like that of many, if not most, Asiatic countries, is a confused and often contradictory mass of fable and vague tradition. The Burmese kings are gods and demi-gods who lived for centuries and who were members of dynasties which numbered many thousands of individual monarchs. According to Burmese legend before the advent of Gautama Buddha there were no fewer than 334,569 sovereigns. Everything else was on the same grand scale in ancient Burma. "Armies," says Lieut.-General Fytche in "Burma Past and Present," "are reckoned by millions, elephants by tens of thousands. The records abound in strange hyperbolic and fabulous narratives." Burman history begins with a creation of the world, or a kind of cosmogony which seems to have been borrowed in the main from the

Hindus. Sir Arthur Playfair's view, expounded in his "History of Burma," is that the Burman nation was formed many years ago by the union of Mongoloid tribes under the influence of Aryan immigrants, chiefly Kshatriyas from Gangetic India, who introduced the softening influences of the Buddhist religion in its simplest form, probably two thousand years ago.

The great repository of Burman lore is the Ma-ha-ra-ra-za-weng or Royal History, which gives a detailed account of the Burmese kings. From the story here related the King of Peng-zee-la-riet, having defeated the Sakya Kings of Kaw-lee-ya, De-wa-da-ha and Ka-pee-la-wot, overran their territories, and the ruler of the last, Abhi-ra-za, abandoned his country and, crossing the mountains eastward, founded a new kingdom with the capital of Ta-goung on the left bank of the Irrawaddy. On the death of this prince there

was a quarrel as to the succession between his two sons—Kan Ra-za-gyee and Kan Ra-za-ngay. The elder brother, collecting his followers, left Ta-goung and established himself at Ka-le-doung, west of the Kyeng Dweng. Soon afterwards he abandoned Ka-le, and, travelling westward, settled on a mountain called the Kyoak-pan-toung to the east of the Gat-tsha-ba or Koo-la-dan River. King Ra-za-ngay had thirty-one successors, the last of whom, Bhien-na-ka, was driven southward by an irruption of Chinese, and settled at Ma-le, about eighty miles from Amarapura, where he died. His subjects separated into three parties. One migrated to what are now the Shan States, another went down the Irrawaddy, and the third remained in Ma-le with the chief queen, Na-ga-tshien-ga. Soon afterwards this queen married Da-za Ra-za, a prince of Ka-pee-la-vastu, and the two proceeding northwards,

founded Upper or Old Pagan, and some years later removed to Ta-goung. This prince was succeeded by seventeen monarchs whose reigns were all short.

At this period there were, therefore, two kingdoms—that of Ta-goung and that of the Pyoo, Kan-ran, and Thek, both ruled by descendants of the Ikshwaksu dynasty of Ka-pee-la-vastu. The second of these was subsequently destroyed by repeated attacks from Arakan. The succession after the death of the seventeenth monarch passed to Mahatham-ba-wa, who reigned six years, and was then succeeded by his brother Tsoo-la-tham-ba-wa, who reigned for thirty-five years. After this the chronological tables become very confused, and it is difficult to trace the course of events. It seems, however, that about 114 B.C., after eight kings besides those named had reigned, there was a change of dynasty. This was brought about, if we are to credit the veracious chronicler, in a very curious way. "One Te-pa, a humble student in a monastery, was directed by his teacher who understood the language of birds, to kill and prepare for him a cock which crowed 'Whosoever eats my head will become king.' The head fell to the ground, and the poor student, thinking it thus rendered unfit for his master, ate it himself and became king accordingly." Te-pa, this fortunate student-king, is described in some of the records as a foreigner, and the suggestion of experts is that the story of the cock was invented to gloss over this transfer of the dynasty to an alien line. Te-pa was succeeded by fifteen kings of his own blood, the last but one of whom is said to have conquered Arakan. The statement, however, is not generally credited. In 82 A.D., a king named Tha-moon-da-rit, the last of the fifteen monarchs alluded to, was on the throne. This prince is chiefly remarkable for having reformed the Burmese calendar and changed the era. Rebellions broke out in his reign, and he had also to cope with a formidable invasion by the Arakanese. Under stress of his misfortunes he fled first to Toung-gnyo, south of Prome, and then to Pa-doung on the other bank of the Irrawaddy, but being still harassed by the Arakanese he went northwards to Meng-doon. Afterwards he quitted Meng-doon and, ascending the Irrawaddy, refounded Pagan near Ta-goung, now known as Old or Upper Pagan to distinguish it from its more modern namesake south of Mandalay. Tha-moon-da-rit's successor was a usurper named Poof-pa-tsaw. This sovereign again changed the era, and introduced that now in common use in Burma. After him followed twenty-two kings.

In about 1017 A.D. A-naw-ra-hla-meng-tsaw ascended the throne; he is the second among the five monarchs to whom the Burmese apply the description "great." This king, a devoted follower of Buddha, was not content with building pagodas and monasteries, but was led by his anxiety to possess copies of the scriptures and relics of the Buddha to invade China in the north and Pegu and Arakan in the south. From China he desired to obtain a famous tooth relic, but was met by a large Chinese force and eventually obliged to content himself with a facsimile of the tooth, which he enshrined in his capital under the Shwee-tsee-goon pagoda. His invasion of Arakan was even less successful, for he utterly failed to obtain the colossal brass image of Buddha which was the object of his campaign. Some years later, a favourable opportunity occurring, he again invaded Arakan, and this time was more fortunate. He deposed the reigning king and placed his half brother Khet-la-reng upon the throne. During his reign Buddhism was formally established "and purged of the numerous heresies which had sprung up." A-naw-ra-hla-meng-tsaw was succeeded by his son Kyan-tsit-tha, and he left to him a goodly heritage including, probably, the Shan States in the north and east, the country now called Upper Burma, Pegu, and the whole Tenasserim coast, while on the west Arakan, if not actually tributary, was weak and dependent to a considerable extent upon the King of Pagan. In 1085 A.D. Kyan-tsit-tha gave place to his son, Aloung-tsee-thoo, and shortly after his accession an attempt was made by the people of Tenasserim to throw off the Burmese yoke, but the revolt was suppressed. Extensive operations were also conducted by this monarch against Arakan, and the hold on the country was strengthened. Aloung-tsee-thoo died in 1160 A.D., and was succeeded by a king who is known in history as Koo-la-kyameng, or the king dethroned by foreigners. Who these foreigners were is matter for speculation, but evidences point to their having been Sinhalese, as there was considerable intercourse between Burma and Ceylon at this period through the port of Bassein.

The succession devolved upon the son of the dethroned king, Na-ra-pa-tee-tsee-thoo, who is famed in history for his patronage of Buddhism. In his anxiety to spread the faith he sent an embassy to Ceylon, which returned with five priests learned in the Buddhist scriptures. Towards the end of the twelfth century, after two other sovereigns had occupied the throne, the country was invaded by the Chinese. The Emperor of China sent to demand tribute, and the invasion followed

upon a refusal of the demand. The Chinese force occupied and destroyed Pagan and drove the reigning king to Bassein. For five months the prince remained at that port, and then essayed to return to his capital on the retirement of the Chinese. He was, however, poisoned at Prome. Kyawtswa, his son, succeeded him, but about 1300 A.D. the Shans under three brothers invaded the kingdom, and Kyawtswa, betrayed by his queen, was forced to become a monk. The Emperor of China intervened on behalf of the rightful sovereign, whereupon the three brothers, acting on the sage advice of a monk to the effect that there can be no dispute where no matter for dispute exists, cut off the unfortunate royal monk's head, and, showing it to the Chinese emissaries, induced them to retire. The once formidable Pagan kingdom was now divided. Arakan and Pegu became completely independent, and Burma was parcelled out amongst a lot of Shan adventurers. It would be idle to follow the fortunes of the successive kings upon whose heads sat the uneasy crown of the Burmese sovereignty. We may without loss of any point of interest carry the narrative forward to the time when European influence made its appearance in these troubled kingdoms of Further India.

From a very early period in the history of European intercourse with India Burma was visited by travellers from the Western Continent. There are evidences that the country was known to the Venetian and other merchants who before the doubling of the Cape by Vasco da Gama conducted a lucrative trade in spices and other Oriental products by way of the Persian Gulf and Arabia. At that time the route across the Malay Peninsula from Tenasserim to Ayuthia, the old capital of Siam, was one of the great trade routes of the East, and European adventurers and merchants naturally followed it with the rest of the travelling class who were proceeding from India to the newer lands of the Far East. In this way Burma became familiar to sections at all events of the inhabitants of Europe long before countries which are now far more accessible were known. The first important contact of Europeans with the country was made by the Portuguese in the early part of the sixteenth century. When Albuquerque conquered Malacca in 1511, he sent an ambassador to the King of Pegu with the object of opening up trade with the country. It does not appear that any immediate result followed from the overtures, but before many years had elapsed the Portuguese played a very conspicuous part in the moulding of Burmese destinies. At about the commencement of the sixteenth century the King

of Toungoo, who until then had been the dominant power in the country, was reduced to subjection by the Talaing King of Pegu. That monarch, with a ruthlessness characteristic of the Oriental despot, compelled his unfortunate victim to send thirty thousand of his Burmese subjects to build temples and other religious edifices in the city of Pegu and its immediate neighbourhood. For years the wretched Burmese laboured in this state of bondage. Then came their deliverance. In 1540, on the occasion of a visit paid by the King of Pegu to the works, the bondsmen rose on their taskmasters, killed the King, ill-treated his ladies, and, in the language of the Portuguese historian, "opened a way with their pickaxes and shovels for the scimitars and standards of the King of Toungoo." This monarch, who is called variously Branginoco, Branjinoco, and Para Mandora by Portuguese writers, was not slow to avail himself of the opening. Collecting an army, he overran all the states which owed allegiance to Pegu, and finally laid siege to the capital. At this juncture a Portuguese galleon, commanded by Ferdinand de Morales, appeared on the scene. This individual's aid was promptly enlisted by the successor of the murdered King of Pegu, but though he threw himself into the struggle with the greatest ardour he found it impossible to make headway against the formidable odds against him. The struggle resulted in the complete defeat of the Peguans and the firm establishment of Branginoco's power on the shattered remnants of the fallen dynasty. Some years later the conqueror led an expedition against the kingdom of Martaban, intent on adding it to his dominions. He laid siege to the city with his hosts, being assisted in the operation by four Portuguese ships commanded by John Cayero. For months the investment proceeded without result beyond the reduction of the inhabitants to the direst straits. When the struggle had reached a critical stage Fernem Mendez Pinto, a Portuguese trader of some note who had been travelling about the Far East for some time previously, came by chance into the Martaban River, and he subsequently wrote a graphic account of the culminating episodes of the siege. His narrative gives a lively description of the manner in which he was suddenly introduced to this scene of carnage. Arriving in the river on the night of March 27, 1547, the ship on which Pinto travelled dropped anchor, the captain's intention being to proceed to the city on the morrow. The visitors had not been in the river long before they were disturbed by the sound of heavy gun firing in the direction of Martaban. Unable to conjecture the cause of these manifestations

the travellers were made very uneasy, but at daylight the ship nevertheless continued its voyage. Having doubled the point called "Moumayn" (Moulmein) the vessel came in sight of the massive walls and numberless towers of Martaban. Then the truth was revealed to the strangers, for on every hand were signs of the tremendous conflict that was proceeding. Pinto soon got into communication with his countrymen who were serving in the Burmese camp. He found them a nondescript crew, but "all rich and in good condition." He was pressed to join them, but he preferred the position of greater freedom and less responsibility of an ordinary spectator. What he saw did not tend to stimulate his national pride. The King of Martaban, after holding out gallantly against tremendous odds, was at length betrayed into a surrender by some Portuguese, who were nominally his allies. As he came out of the city into the camp and passed near to the Portuguese captains he threw himself on the neck of his elephant and said, "Let me not see those ungrateful and wicked men! Kill me or remove them, or I will go no further." Upon this the Burmese guard reviled the Portuguese and bade them all retire and shave their heads. "Not to tell a lie," observed Pinto, "I was never more hurt in my life than by this public insult offered to the honour of my countrymen." It is easy to believe the veracious chronicler, for the deed of betrayal was in truth a vile one. Branginoco had promised to spare the lives of the King and of his women and children. But he had no sooner got the unfortunate prince into his power than he proceeded to wreak his vengeance upon his captives in truly Oriental fashion. Gibbets were erected upon a neighbouring hill, and upon these the Queen, her children, and ladies, to the number of a hundred and forty, were suspended by their feet until death put an end to their sufferings. The King and forty of his nobles were cast into the sea with stones tied to their necks. So revolting was the whole business that Branginoco's own men rose in protest against it, but the tyrant having accomplished his end withdrew to Pegu and so escaped the threatened danger.

Branginoco followed up his conquest of Martaban with an attack on Prome. The town, after a siege of five months' duration, was captured and burnt, and its inhabitants were put to the sword. The monster repeated the atrocities which had stained his victory at Martaban. According to Portuguese writers, two thousand children were cut to pieces and given as food to wild animals. The Queen was publicly whipped,

and subsequently killed after being subjected to horrible ill treatment by the soldiery. Later on the corpse of the ill-fated lady was tied to the person of the King, and with this gruesome encumbrance, he was thrown into the river. A similar fate was the lot of three hundred of the principal inhabitants of the city. Flushed with his success, Branginoco now gave his attention to Siam. At the head of a vast army, which numbered a great body of foreigners, including, says Pinto, a thousand Portuguese, the conquering monarch marched to Ayuthia the Siamese capital, and laid close siege to it. His attacks were gallantly repelled by the garrison, led by a small band of Portuguese, commanded by James Pereyra, but it would probably have fallen had not news reached Branginoco, at a critical period of the siege, of a formidable revolution having broken out in Pegu, headed by a priest named Zemindoo, a member of the old Talaing dynasty of Pegu. So serious was the situation represented to be that Branginoco immediately raised the siege of Ayuthia, and proceeded in hot haste to Pegu. Arriving outside that city in the early part of November, 1548, he fought a great battle, and utterly routed Zemindoo's forces. Zemindoo managed to escape, but the wretched inhabitants who had supported his cause remained as a mark for Branginoco's vengeance, and he wreaked it with accustomed savagery. His career of blood, however, was now nearing its close. On his way to Settang to punish Xenim, the Governor of that province, for support rendered to Zemindoo, he was surprised at night by Xenim, and killed. Xenim afterwards assumed royal honours, and he took into his favour Diego Suarez de Albergaria, the Portuguese favourite of the late king. Diego Suarez was an adventurer of a type which was to become common in later years in this region of Asia. He wielded enormous power in the State, and had amassed great wealth by his unscrupulous exactions. The unfortunate natives trembled under the despotic exercise of his authority. His downfall was brought about by a disgraceful act of tyranny. One day he stopped a wedding procession which was passing through the street, killed the bridegroom, and caused the bride to be taken to his house. The poor girl, to save herself from dishonour, committed suicide. The bride's father was powerless to obtain redress for the crime at the moment, but some time afterwards when Suarez's power had been weakened, he collected a great body of inhabitants and repaired to the palace to demand justice of the King. Xenim, alarmed for his own safety, gave the Portuguese commander



A TYPICAL BURMAN.

over to the vengeance of the people. A terrible end awaited him. He was stoned to death, and his body was literally torn to pieces and scattered about the streets of Pegu. Xenim did not long survive his rapacious minister. In an action he fought against Zemindoo's army he was killed by an arquebuse shot fired by a Portuguese. After this Xenim's troops surrendered, and Zemindoo, without opposition, occupied Pegu on February 20, 1531, causing himself to be crowned King of Pegu in the principal temple of the city. After reigning a year the new monarch was called upon to meet an attack by Mengfara-gzee, the son-in-law of Branginoco, who came at the head of a great force to claim what he regarded as his rightful heritage. In the fight Zemindoo was utterly defeated, but he was able to escape to the mountains. He settled down in what he considered a secure retreat, and took for his wife the daughter of a hardy mountaineer. In an evil moment for himself he confided to his spouse his real position. The woman forthwith told her parents, and they, tempted by the heavy reward which was offered for the fugitive king, betrayed him. He was executed in circumstances which are thus graphically related by Pinto :—" In the midst came the poor patient mounted on a lean ill-favoured jade and the hangman on the crupper behind him, holding him up under both the arms. This miserable prince was so poorly clad that his naked skinné was everywhere seen ; withal, in an exceeding derision of his person, they had set upon his head a crown of straw, like unto an uralinal case, which crown was garnished with mussel shells fastened together with blew thread ; and round about his iron collar was a number of onions tied. Howbeit, though he was reduced to so deplorable an estate, and that his face was scarce like to that of a living man yet left he not (for all that) from having something of I know not what in his eyes, which manifested the condition of a king. There was besides observed in him a majesticall sweetness which drew tears from all that beheld him. On arriving at the great scaffold which had been expressly erected for him, the Chirca of Justice fell to reading of his sentence from an high seat where he was placed ; the contents whereof were in few words these : ' The living God of our heads, Lord of the Crown of the Kings of Ava commands that the perfidious Zemindoo be executed as the perturbator of the people of the earth, and the mortal enemy of the Brama nation.' This said, he made a sign with his hand, and instantly the hangman cut off his head with one blow, showing

it to all the people which were there without number, and divided his body into eight quarters, setting his bowels and other interior parts, which were put together, in a place by themselves ; then covering all with a yellow cloth, which is a mark of mourning amongst them, they were left there till the going down of the sun, at which time they were burnt."

Zemindoo's death did not bring security to the troubled country. His successor, after reigning for a brief period disappeared from the scene to give place to another phantom monarch, and the process was indefinitely repeated throughout the remainder of the sixteenth and during a greater part of the seventeenth centuries. One of the integrating factors at work—possibly the greatest—was the Portuguese influence which had been intruded into this part of the Eastern world in the circumstances already related. In the wake of the early discoverers followed a horde of adventurers of the worst type—men of depraved lives and base instincts who were lost to all sense of honour. Most of them were frankly buccaneers, who ravaged the seas and imposed a toll upon the trade of the Indian seas which in those days was extensive. They were dispersed pretty thoroughly throughout the countries abutting upon the Indian Ocean, but at the beginning of the seventeenth century we find a considerable colony of them planted in Arakan, whither they had been attracted by the local king, whose name is given variously as Shimili Shah and Xilimixa. This potentate had made himself master of Pegu, and, being anxious to extend his conquests in other directions, took into his service as many European adventurers as he could secure. Amongst the number was Philip de Brito, who is better known in history as Nicote. This individual established himself at Syriam (Than-hlyeng) on the Pegu river, nominally as a servant of Shimili Shah, but actually in an independent position. Eventually Nicote became practically ruler of Pegu and of the neighbouring kingdom of Toungoo. Shimili Shah, finding how his authority had been abused by his quondam servant, attempted by force to regain his authority. The venture proving a failure he resorted to chicanery to obtain his ends. He affected to be desirous as a mark of regard for Nicote to transfer to him a port in Arakan. Falling into the trap Nicote sent a number of his fellow countrymen to settle on the spot. At the same time he despatched his son with a large retinue to the court of the King of Arakan. As soon as the treacherous monarch had got his victims completely in his power he caused

them all to be murdered. At about the same period the King of Toungoo joined hands with the King of Ava in a desperate effort to destroy Nicote's power. A great army besieged Syriam, and soon reduced Nicote to desperate straits. At length the adventurer was betrayed by one of his officers and condemned to suffer a miserable death from impalement by his savage conqueror.

The downfall of Nicote coincided with the rise of another European adventurer—a Spaniard named Sebastian Gonzales de Tibao. Gonzales started life as a soldier in Bengal in 1603, but, finding promotion slow, he took to piracy in the Bay of Bengal, and so made an unenviable name for himself as the commander of a great fleet which ravaged the Sunderbunds and the coast of Arakan. A revolution in Arakan resulting in the deposition of the King by his cousin, gave Gonzales an opportunity of intervening which he was not slow to seize. Espousing the cause of the dethroned king, he conducted an expedition against Arakan. The enterprise proved a failure, but Gonzales maintained a connection with the exile and married one of his sisters. Not long afterwards the exile king died with suspicious suddenness. Public rumour attributed his end to poisoning, and held Gonzales responsible for the deed ; whether the adventurer was guilty of the crime or not he continued to profit by his royal brother in his death. He seized all his treasure, and turned his family out into the world penniless. When people began to murmur at his arbitrary action he sought to appease them by unfolding a project for the marriage of the dead king's consort to his brother Anthony. But the Queen's refusal to embrace Christianity put an end to this delectable scheme. Gonzales, at a somewhat later period, allied himself with the King of Arakan against the Moguls who were threatening his dominions ; but his characteristic habit of villainy led him to play the traitor to his confiding ally. On some pretext he induced all the captains of the Arakan fleet to come on board his ship, and having got them there he murdered them to a man. Afterwards he captured a number of the Arakan ships, and either put the crews to death or sold them into slavery. This was the prelude to a regular campaign in which the Arakan coast was devastated and the inhabitants put to the sword. Infuriated at the dastardly conduct of Gonzales, the King of Arakan seized the adventurer's nephew and impaled him on rising ground near the shore in close proximity to the scene of some of the worst exploits of the piratical fleet. The Spaniard now sought, by an

alliance with the Portuguese to destroy the power of the King. A fleet was sent from Goa to his aid, but it sailed at an unfortunate juncture, for the Dutch were at the time ravaging the Eastern Seas, and a fleet belonging to them fell in with the Portuguese squadron while it was making its attack on Arakan, and badly crippled it. Gonzales went unwillingly to the support of his friends and was ultimately inflicted upon them by the King of Arakan. The Portuguese Admiral was slain and many of his men fell into the hands of the Arakanese who treated them with the ruthless severity that might have been expected. Gonzales himself contrived to escape with a few of his ships to Sandiva, but his prestige was destroyed and he soon afterwards lapsed into obscurity. On the other hand the King of Arakan, with his authority revived by this notable success over a formidable foreign combination; was able to extend his authority in many directions. In course of time the Arakanese power became so formidable that we find the natives of the kingdom in the reign of the Emperor Jehangier overrunning Lower Bengal and even settling on a portion of the territory. Subsequently they took a prominent part in some of the leading events which marked the break up of the Mogul empire. Bernier, whose narrative of travels in India in the seventeenth century is one of the classics of Asiatic travel literature, gives us a vivid picture of Arakanese life as it was at this period. He describes Arakan as having been for many years the resort of Portuguese settlers, and states that it had at different times contained numerous Christian slaves or Portuguese half-castes, as well as Europeans collected from various parts of the world. "No persons," he says, "were better received there than those who had deserted their monasteries, married two or three wives, or committed great crimes." These people were Christians only in name. In Arakan they threw off all restraint; their lives were most detestable; they massacred or poisoned one another without compunction or remorse. They sometimes assassinated their own priests; and to confess the truth the priests were often no better than their murderers. The King of Arakan lived in perpetual dread of the Great Mogul. He kept these Christian foreigners as a kind of advanced guard for the protection of his frontier. He permitted them to occupy a fort called Chittagong, and made them grants of land in its neighbourhood. They were in no way amenable to Government; it is, therefore, not surprising that their only trade was rapine and piracy.

They scoured the neighbouring seas in light vessels, called galliases, with which they entered the numerous grottos and estuaries of the Ganges and ravaged the islands of Lower Bengal. They often penetrated forty or fifty leagues into the country and attacked villages by surprise on market days or when the inhabitants were assembled for the celebration of a marriage or some other festival. They made slaves of their unhappy captives, and burnt whatever they could not carry away. It is owing to their repeated depredations that we see so many fine islands in the mouth of the Ganges utterly depopulated. They were formerly thickly peopled; they are now entirely deserted by human beings, and become the resort of tigers and beasts of prey." Bernier, adding to these interesting details, mentions that the headquarters of the European freebooters was the island of Sandiva, which commanded a part of the mouth of the Ganges, and he states that for a long period—apparently after the disappearance of Gonzales—Fra Joan, an Augustinian monk, reigned on the island as a petty sovereign.

In reference to the connection of the Arakanese with the events which affected the destinies of the Mogul Emperors, Bernier relates a remarkable episode which followed the death of Shah Jehan. This Emperor left four sons who fought fiercely amongst themselves for the succession to the vacant throne. Aurengzebe, as the student of Indian history will remember, emerged the dubious victor from this fratricidal struggle. Of the three unsuccessful brothers, one was murdered at Delhi, a second was imprisoned for life, and the third, Shoojah, saved his life by flight. It is about this fugitive prince that Bernier's story is told. Shoojah, who had been Viceroy of Bengal, fled to Dacca, the then capital of the region, and from that city sent messengers to the King of Arakan imploring his protection. The King readily responded to the request, and despatched a fleet of galliases manned by European freebooters of the type described to bring the prince and his family to Arakan. Shoojah, with his wife, three sons, and several daughters, in due course arrived safely at Arakan; but on the voyage their nominal guardians took care to relieve them of many of their valuable jewels, which were rifled from chests amongst the prince's baggage. Shoojah was received with apparent friendliness by the King, and was supplied by him with a residence and the necessaries of life. In accordance with a prearranged bargain, Shoojah desired to be supplied with a ship to take him to Mocha, where he hoped to find a permanent asylum.

The demand was evaded from time to time until the fugitive prince, becoming alarmed at the attitude the monarch assumed, sent his eldest son to the palace with a rich present to attempt to move the King to act up to his pledge. The mission was an utter fiasco. Not only was the ship withheld, but the wily barbarian was emboldened by the overtures made to him to make a demand on Shoojah for one of his daughters in marriage. The idea of a member of the great imperial house of India allying herself with an outer savage, as the King of Arakan was regarded, was utterly repugnant to the prince, and he emphatically declined the questionable honour. The prospective royal bridegroom was in no mood to accept a refusal, and he promptly showed that if the union was not contracted with the father's consent it would be carried through without it. In despair at the terrible predicament in which he was placed, Shoojah conceived the desperate idea of planning a revolution for the overthrow of the King. His plan was, with his Mahomedan followers, reinforced by a body of Portuguese adventurers, to rush the palace, slay the King, and establish upon the ruins of the fallen dynasty his own authority. Unhappily for him the plot was divulged on the day prior to that fixed for its execution. He had just time to quit Arakan in safety, but he was followed by a body of Arakanese and put to death while vainly attempting to escape into Pegu. His women and children were made captives and taken back to Arakan. Subsequently the King married Shoojah's eldest daughter in pursuance of the plan which he had resolutely formed. The queen mother at a later period showed her anxiety to join in wedlock with the eldest son, but the youthful prince was so little disposed to accept the advances that he formed a new conspiracy against the King. This revolt was an even more hopeless enterprise than the previous one, and when, as was almost inevitable, the designs were disclosed to the monarch his anger knew no bounds. By his orders Shoojah's entire family was exterminated. With an exquisite sense of cruelty he caused the males to be beheaded with blunt battle-axes, while the females were confined to their chambers and left to die a lingering death from starvation. The monster did not spare even his own wife, although she was soon to become a mother. In justice to him it must be said that he was neither better nor worse than his royal fellows in Further India at this distant period and even down to a far later day. They literally waded through blood to a throne, and having seated themselves there maintained their prestige by orgies of butchery.

CHAPTER II.

English Intercourse with Burma—Ralph Fitch's Visit—Old Accounts of Trade with Burma—The Dutch in Further India—English and Dutch driven out of Burma—English occupy the Island of Negrais—Mission sent from Madras to the King of Ava—Peguans invade Burma and take Dweepdee, the last of the Legitimate Burmese Kings, Prisoner to Pegu.

It would be unprofitable to closely follow Burmese history in its sinuous windings through the period of the seventeenth century. The kings who attained to power were men who left little mark on history. Brutal despots all, they were only distinguished by a common lust for slaughter. The chronicles of the native kings are a veritable nightmare of wars and civil upheavals, culminating always in excessive sacrifice of human life. Turn we from this picture to that more peaceful aspect of Burmese annals which relates to the development of European intercourse with the country. As has been noted, the Portuguese, from the earliest years of their conquests in India down to the end of the sixteenth century, were well known in Burma. Doubtless there were also isolated travellers of other nations, judging from chance references which are to be found in old works of travel. As far, however, as the English are concerned, there is no record of any intercourse with the country until quite the end of the sixteenth century. The first of the British race to set foot in Burma was Ralph Fitch, a well-known London merchant of his day, who travelled extensively in India and Burma, in the period from 1583 to 1591, and has left behind him a fascinating record of his wanderings. Fitch journeyed in the company of another London merchant named Newberry, a jeweller named Leedes, and an artist of the name of Storie. The advent of the party in India excited the jealous suspicion of the Portuguese, who regarded the whole of this portion of the East as their exclusive preserve. On reaching Ormuz, at the head of the Persian Gulf, whither they had travelled overland from a Syrian port, they were seized by the Portuguese and sent to Goa to be dealt with by the Viceroy. Storie gained his freedom by adopting the Roman Catholic faith, but the other three were detained under surveillance until a certain day when they managed to escape from Portuguese territory. Once clear of the Portuguese, they found the great and fascinating world of India open. They trudged across the great upland known as the Deccan to the famous city of Golconda, the capital of the Mahomedan power in

Southern India at that stage in Indian history. Afterwards they found their way to Agra to the Court of the Great Mogul, which was then established there. Here the trio of adventurers separated. Leedes took service with Akbar, and settled down at Agra, Newberry returned home via Lahore, Afghanistan, and Persia, and Fitch made his way eastwards down the Jumna and the Ganges to Bengal. In 1586, he took passage in a small Portuguese vessel for Burma, landing at Rangoon, which even at that time was an important trade centre. His account of his travels in Burma is very readable, and serves to give a pleasant insight into the mind of the writer, as well as an interesting picture of the country. Concerning the trade of Pegu, he wrote: "In India, there are few commodities which serve for Pegu except opium of Cambodia, painted cloth of St. Thome, or of Masulipatan, and white cloth of Bengala, which is spent there in great quantity. They bring thither also much cotton yarn, red coloured with a root, which they call saia, which will never lose its colour; it is very well sold, and very much of it cometh yearly to Pegu. The ships which come from Bengala, St. Thome, and Masulipatan, come to the bar of Negrais and Cosmin. To Martaban, a port of the sea in the kingdom of Pegu, come many ships from Malacca laden with sandal, porcelain, and other wares of China, and with camphora of Borneo, and pepper from Achin in Sumatra. To Cition, a port of Pegu, come ships from Mecca, with woollen cloths, scarlets, velvets, opium, and such like. There are in Pegu eight brokers, whom they call Tareghe, which are bound to sell your goods at the price which they be worth, and you give them for their labour two in the hundred, and they be bound to make your debt good; because you sell your merchandises on their word. If the broker pay you not at his day, you may take him home and keep him in your house, which is a great shame for him. And if he pay you not presently, you may take his wife and children and his slaves, and bind them at your door, and set them in the sun, for this is the law of the country. . . . The merchandize which be in Pegu, are gold,

silver, rubies, sapphires, spinells, musk, benjamin or frankincense, long pepper, tin, lead, copper, lacher, whereof they make hard wax, rice, and wine made of rice and some sugar."

It was no doubt to Fitch's report on the commercial capabilities of the region that was due the attention which both the English and Dutch East India Companies early directed to Burma. In Foulke Grevil's report on the memorial submitted to Queen Elizabeth in 1600 stating the reasons why the English merchants might trade with the East Indies, especially to such rich kingdoms as were not subject to the King of Spain and Portugal, specific mention is made of Tenasserim as one of the places to which shipping might resort. John Davis, of Arctic fame, who made a voyage to the East in a Dutch ship in the years 1598-1600, visited Tenasserim, and he referred to it in his narrative and journal as "a place of great trade." The opening years of the seventeenth century witnessed a serious effort on the part of both English and Dutch to establish themselves in the Bay of Bengal, and Burma received a full share of their attention. As early as 1611 the latter had established settlements at Pulicat and Pettipolli on the Coromandel Coast and through them had conducted a trade with Burma. The English gradually followed them, and in 1619 we find William Methold, the principal of the English settlements on the Coromandel Coast, writing to the directors at home urging the importance of the trade of this part of the Indies. "Tanassery," he said, "lyeth next to Pegu, a small kingdom and tributary to Syam, from which place this is but the port, and that only to the inhabitants of this gulf (Bengal), for we find a way with our shipping into the river of Syam." He also stated that "the merchants of Golconda trafficked with their ships ordinarily with Mocha, to Achteen in Sumatra, to Arakan, Pegu, and Tannassery, returning the following April, and that the ships generally left in September. To Tannassery they carried red cotton yarn, red, white Beethyles (a kind of muslin), paintings of several sorts befitting that countries wear, and landing them at Tannassery, carry them from thence to Siam, 14 days overland." Philip Baldaeus, a Dutch "minister of the

Word of God," writing towards the middle of the seventeenth century, also makes reference to the trade of Burma and adjacent countries. "From hence (Pulicat) to Aracan, Pegu, and Tanassery, you pay eight or ten per cent. for freight of pepper, sandalwood, stuffs, steel and iron, and make your returns in gold, rubies of Ava, gummi-lacca, long white pepper, lead, &c. Betwixt Tanassery and Occeda (Kedah) towards Malacca are the harbours of Tanangar (Trang), Sencaza, and Perach (Perak), opposite to Acheen, whither they trade with vast profit and bring back abundance of tin, a commodity which is in much request with the Moors, wherewith they tin their copper vessels."

The Dutch connection with Burma commenced at a very early period in their career in the East. Isolated vessels visited Tenasserim, Rangoon, and other ports from time to time during the first two or three decades of the seventeenth century, and when after the Dutch conquest of Malacca the Bata-vian Government was free to turn its attention to India and Further India, we find it despatching a mission to the King of Pegu with the object of forming permanent ties with the country. The envoy took with him from Arent Gardenys, the Governor of the Coromandel Coast, a letter* of recommendation which, as a characteristic specimen of the epistles which passed between the representatives of the European trading companies and the native potentates at the time, may be cited. The communication opens with this singular invocation: "King of Kings, Lord of all lands, whose power and dominion extend from East to West, who possesses the greatest number of elephants and horses, who is Lord of the ruby mines and the golden seat and the ruler over four different laws, who is now downhearted but always ready to take arms, rightful Governor and most worthy King." It then proceeds to intimate that king's present had been received and to refer to trade transactions. Afterwards comes an announcement of the capture of Malacca, with a statement that during the siege seven thousand Portuguese died by hunger or the sword, "which," remarked the writer, "proves that the hand of the Lord is heavy on this deceitful and treacherous nation." The letter winds up with some allusions to trade relations.

"It has caused us much surprise and annoyance," Gardenys wrote, "to learn that the goods brought last year to the country were detained for more than three months

at Sirayh under pretext that the collector of the revenues was absent. We are sure his majesty was not cognisant of this. . . .

"We have not been able to buy any cockatoos, red birds, or white crows. No cloth of gold 13 or 14 asta wide is made in Persia. Cats, as described by the King, we should not know where to find." From this communication it is to be inferred that for some time previously the Dutch and the Peguans, or Peguers as they are sometimes called by historical writers, had been on close terms of intimacy. The chief bond of union no doubt was a common hatred of the Portuguese. In Burma the hand of Albuquerque's countrymen had been heavy upon the native rulers and they viewed with more than common interest and sympathy the great struggle then being waged throughout the East between the Dutch and Portuguese. It was through the influence of this sentiment no doubt that the Dutch were enabled to establish themselves in Burma. They do not appear to have ever secured a foothold at Rangoon; but there is evidence that even prior to the despatch of the letter given above to the King of Pegu they had had an establishment in Arakan. The factory was founded under the provisions of the following curious grant from the king of that country:—

"In the year 1635 on the 11th day of November, I the great King sitting in the centre of the public place surrounded by my courtiers, Lord of the Gold House and of the white and red elephant, the true King of this place, ordain my governors, the superintendent of the harbour and the guardians of the women, to allow the Dutch freely to sell their iron, nuts, mace, and cloves, and those who buy these articles freely to re-sell them.

"I also command my governors and the spies of the town and all those whom I have appointed to watch the actions of the Dutch and of the strangers who come to this place that they shall be at liberty to buy rice, melies, indigo, gun-lac, wax, white muslin, and slaves, and those who offer these goods for sale shall not be molested or impeded, but the slaves must be new Bengal people."

Another firman granted at the same time by "the greatest and mightiest King of Aracan, Lord of the Gold House and of the White and Red Elephant, the invincible and true ruler of the kingdom," gave the Dutch authority to sell tobacco, and a further regulation prescribed the manner in which slaves should be purchased, ordering that whenever purchases were made "the slave shall be brought before the priest and closely interrogated as to his origin." After the conclusion

of this compact troubles arose between the Dutch and the Arakanese, and their factory was raided and the Dutchmen connected with it made prisoners. In order to adjust the difficulty the Government at Batavia sent a special mission to Arakan in October, 1649. The envoy, Jacobus Heemskerk, in his diary* gives a lively picture of the country as it presented itself to him and his companions. On their way inland to meet the King they were entertained at one of the stopping places by a party of mountaineers who danced and sang to them. The Arakanese in their company "took great delight in mocking and teasing these poor creatures," but the only difference the visitors could see between the savage and the educated natives was that the former "were more shabbily dressed and had coarser manners." The King displayed no eagerness to receive the mission, and after waiting for nearly a fortnight in vain for an audience, the Dutch envoy addressed a remonstrance to His Majesty. He complained that he had been treated "not as an ambassador from powerful rulers as our superiors are, but as despised and poor people who are left in this place with the slaves, exposed to cold and hardship, in want of many things which cannot be provided for us, in danger of the tigers who prowl about our hut and whom we must continually drive away." At length the King deigned to intimate that he would receive the strangers. They at once proceeded to obey. "We having embarked," says Heemskerk, "all the galleys, proceeded slowly up the river at the sound of musical instruments. Turning the point we saw lying in a very large river numerous galiots, a great number of galleys, and quite 1,500 galleas along the bank, all having armed soldiers on board and small cannons. They were all prettily decorated with flags, standards, shields, &c. There were, besides, over 4,000 prows with provisions and occupied by the ladies and wives of the nobles who formed part of the suite. On both sides of the river the banks for a distance of 2½ miles were lined with armed soldiers, among whom were a number of horsemen decked out in Persian style and several elephants bearing on their backs gilded thrones and fully equipped for war. As far as we could judge the number of people assembled was 350,000. It was evident the King's whole force had been brought together, and most of the inhabitants of the country were on the spot, which somewhat explained to us the delay of which we had been complaining, as it must have required

* MSS. Dutch Records at The Hague. First Series. Vol. XVII., No. DXV.

* MSS. Dutch Records at The Hague, First Series, Vol. XII.